

**Town of Arlington
Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)**

Tuesday, December 16, 2003 7:15 PM

Committee members present: Elisabeth Carr-Jones, Larry Englisher, Lt. Jim McHugh, Scott Smith, Ed Starr, David Walkinshaw

Others: Carolyn & Philip Sheehan (Hutchinson Road, Arlington), Bill & Charlene Band (Hutchinson Road, Winchester), Paolo Marinelli

1. The minutes of 11/18/03 were approved unanimously.

2. DPW news

John Sanchez was attending another meeting this evening, so Ed Starr reported. It appears that enough funds will be available in the DPW budget (assuming a 4-year lifetime for thermoplastic) to do 12 new crosswalks in thermoplastic each year.

3. Hutchinson Road

Larry Englisher outlined the issues and potential solutions from the discussion last May: Issues include speed and volume of traffic, safety of pedestrians walking in the road (one crash occurred 4 years ago), trucks and landscape vehicles in the road. Possible solutions include more speed limit signs and speed enforcement, stop signs on some of the side streets, gutter lines, trimming the branches that obstruct the shoulder, and providing a protected pedestrian way.

Phil Sheehan made a number of observations:

- Since the repaving in 1995, speeds have increased to 40 MPH
- Winchester had a traffic count over 4 days (Friday-Monday) indicating a total of 12,500 vehicles. This conflicts with the Arlington counts that indicated approximately 1,600 vehicles / day.
- On the Winchester side, there has been visible enforcement.
- In Winchester, there is a painted gutter line; the road in Arlington is 3-feet wider.
- On the Country Club side of the road, untrimmed vegetation impact visibility and make it difficult to walk.

David Walkinshaw and Ed Starr noted that compared to other cut-throughs in Arlington, the traffic volume is not exceptional. However, speed may be an issue (APD speed measurements at Oldham indicate an mean speed of 29 mph, and 85th percentile speed of 35 mph). Jim McHugh noted that the actual legal speed limit is 30 MPH. David Walkinshaw noted that existing Town bylaws call for trees and brush to be trimmed along roads. Since the logical side for people to walk is the golf course side, it is logical to have the trees trimmed on that side. David Walkinshaw suggested that we recommend that the Board of Selectmen communicate with the Winchester Country Club. Phil Sheehan offered to identify the specific trees. We gratefully accepted his offer.

The committee agreed on the following actions:

- Larry Englisher will speak with Arlington DPW about the feasibility of a painted gutter line
- We will draft a letter for the Board of Selectmen to send to the Winchester Country Club, about the need to trim encroaching vegetation.

4. Snow plowing / safety issues

Scott Smith noted that he had sent an e-mail to Diane Mahon and Jack Hurd regarding snow plowing practices, in particular their effect on pedestrians. Jim McHugh noted that plowing enforcement concerns should be called into Police dispatch: 781-643-1212. We agreed that given TACs current workload, TAC would not seek an additional role in snow removal.

5. Mass. Ave CDBG Grant

Scott Smith has been working with Kevin O'Brien on the request for proposal for contractor services on the Mass. Ave. corridor. He also met with Andrea Masciari (Belmont Traffic Advisory Committee) and Mark D'Andrea (Belmont Citizens Forum) to discuss ideas for both Mass. Ave. and Trapelo Road, since the two roadways have similar issues.

6. Mass/ Pleasant CDBG Grant

Ed Starr noted that an issue is tracking down the capabilities of the existing signal equipment. Apparently, it is possible to interconnect the signals from Mass Ave/ Mill to Mass Ave/Franklin. Next step may be a meeting with Tri-State, the contractor responsible for signal maintenance. Jim McHugh explained that although signal maintenance is funded through the Fire department, work orders go through the Police.

Ed Starr also noted that Carol Kowalski had sent a letter objecting to the plans for concurrent right turns / pedestrian walk signal, as incorrectly reported in the Advocate. Since there is as yet no such plan (the investigation of the intersection is just starting), we agreed that a response to this effect would be appropriate.

7. Board of Selectmen on 12/22

Ed Starr reported that we are on the agenda for 12/22, with three items: Bylaws, Quincy/Gray and Rawson Road. We should be early in the agenda.

8. Dedicated Bus Lanes at Alewife

Scott Smith noted that the Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS) Program for Mass Transportation has a number of items relevant to Arlington. (This document is a long range planning document for public transportation improvements in the Boston area.) One item is the installation of dedicated bus lanes at Alewife Station, which would make the bus routes that terminate at Alewife both faster and more reliable. He pointed out that a substantial number of people would benefit, since the number of Alewife passengers who arrive by bus (either MBTA or a private operator) is almost as high as the number who drive and park in the garage. Bus lanes might be proposed as mitigation for some of the proposed development in the Alewife station area.

[Note: According to the Transportation Assessment Study, there are approximately 1500 inbound boardings within the Town of Arlington each weekday on bus routes that terminate at Alewife. Most of these passengers are probably going to Alewife.]

9. Crosswalk Working Group

There has been no action in the past month, but the group agreed to schedule a meeting [Now planned for 12/30/2003 7:30 PM]

10. Current List of Projects

Although Downing Square has not been formally assigned, we did offer to review traffic studies that have come in as part of development proposals. Once such study (for 26 apartment units near Downing Square) is now before us. There was general agreement that, from a traffic standpoint, it would be better to have the entrance to this development on Lowell Street rather than on Park Avenue. We agreed that Ed Starr and other interested TAC members would continue to review the proposal and would make the appropriate recommendations to the Arlington Redevelopment Board.

Jim McHugh supported greater TAC involvement in traffic issues with new developments, since we can address them in greater detail than the Redevelopment Board. David Walkinshaw pointed out that input early in the process is generally more effective.

11. 11/2001 Decision Criteria

Ed Starr asked committee members to review the decision criteria from two years ago, and to send him input by e-mail.

12. Action Items in Process

The walk signal at Mass. Ave. and Appleton has been fixed.

13. Alternative Transportation Day

Elisabeth Carr-Jones reported that the Parks and Recreation Commission was supportive of the Alternate Transportation Day, now scheduled for Sunday 5/16/2004. Issues include

- Finding funds for the Recreation Department person and possibly a Police detail (most likely under \$1000)
- The Police Department may want to keep their annual Bike Rodeo in June.

Larry Englisher suggested that we have MBTA, ridesharing and Zipcar involvement. Scott Smith suggested that, if possible, this might be a good time to roll out the first Zipcar located in Arlington.

14. New Member Applications

Several applications have been submitted for the new TAC slot. At this point, we expect that interviews will occur in January.

15. General Discussions

After some discussion of the Park Ave Ext. / Summer Street traffic signal, the committee unanimously voted to recommend a signal-ahead sign on Park Ave. Extension, on the southbound approach to the signal.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 PM

Handouts:

Meeting agenda, 2004 meeting dates, letter from Carol Kowalski, TAC decision criteria, status of actions taken – from Ed Starr

Minutes from 11/2003, and excerpt from the CTPS Program for Mass Transportation on Alewife busways – from Scott Smith

Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee proposal to the Parks and Recreation Commission for Alternate Transportation Day – from Elisabeth Carr-Jones